

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NATO 04821

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY
DESIGNATE VEST. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECDEF FOR
SECRETARY BROWN. FROM AMBASSADOR BENNETT.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, MILI, POL

SUBJECT: NATO ASYG FOR DEFENSE SUPPORT

1. DR. WALTER LABERGE, WHO HAS SERVED SO ABLY AS NATO
ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL FOR DEFENSE SUPPORT, WILL BE
LEAVING THIS SUMMER TO ASSUME A SENIOR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT
POSITION IN WASHINGTON. LABERGE HAS PLAYED A CENTRAL
ROLE IN OUR EFFORT TO DEVELOP A NATO AIRBORNE EARLY
WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEM, AND HAS DEVELOPED THE KIND
OF RELATIONSHIP ON OTHER KEY DEFENSE ISSUES WITH SENIOR
OFFICIALS OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF, NATO MILITARY
AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL DELEGATIONS THAT WILL BE
EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR HIS SUCCESSOR TO DEVELOP QUICKLY.
MOREOVER, HIS DEPARTURE COINCIDES WITH OUR EFFORTS TO
PURSUE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE US INITIATIVES IN NATO
DEFENSE PLANNING THAT PRESIDENT CARTER ADVANCED IN LONDON.

2. TO ASSURE THAT WE MAINTAIN MOMENTUM ESPECIALLY ON THE
PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVES WILL REQUIRE REPLACING LABERGE AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH A SENIOR AMERICAN OF PROVEN
COMPETENCE IN THE SPHERE OF DEFENSE MANAGEMENT. INDEED,
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I BELIEVE THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE US INITIATIVES IN THE
AREA OF NATO DEFENSE WILL DEPEND HEAVILY UPON THE EFFORTS
OF LABERGE'S SUCCESSOR, WHO WILL HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSI-
BILITY FOR THE LONG-TERM PRIORITY PROGRAMS FOR RATIONALI-
ZATION AND CONSUMER LOGISTICS. MOREOVER, HE WILL BE
PIVOTAL IN FUTURE ALLIED EFFORTS IN THE AREA OF STANDARD-
IZATION OF ARMAMENTS. HE ALSO WILL HEAD THE LARGE

DEFENSE SUPPORT DIVISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF AND WILL SERVE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE IMPORTANT CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL ARMAMENTS DIRECTORS, A SENIOR NATO BODY THAT REPORTS DIRECTLY TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL AND IS CHARGED WITH PURSUING THE INTER-ALLIED DIALOGUE ON STANDARDIZATION.

3. I URGE THAT THE REPLACEMENT FOR LABERGE BE SELECTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ONLY IF WE PLACE A HIGHLY-QUALIFIED SUCCESSOR IN HIS POSITION DURING THIS SUMMER WILL HE BE IN A POSITION IN THE AUTUMN TO ASSURE THE MAINTENANCE OF MOMENTUM IN OUR PROGRAMS. I ALSO HOPE THAT LABERGE'S SUCCESSOR WOULD AGREE TO SERVE FOR A FULL THREE YEARS, THE NORMAL TERM. BOTH LABERGE AND HIS PREDECESSOR DEPARTED BEFORE THEIR TERMS EXPIRED, AND I BELIEVE WE MUST AVOID THIS HAPPENING DURING THE PERIOD THAT WE ARE SEEKING TO IMPLEMENT THE LONG-TERM PROGRAMS INSPIRED BY THE UNITED STATES. BENNETT

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF.

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